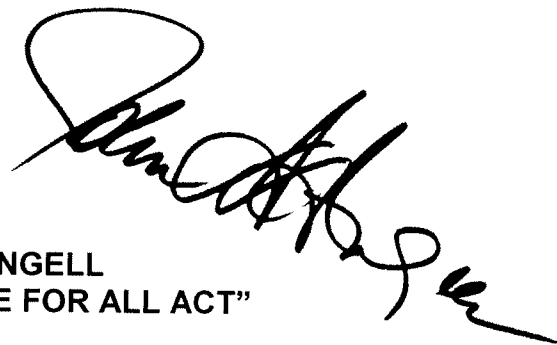


**FLOOR STATEMENT
OF
THE HONORABLE JOHN D. DINGELL
ON INTRODUCTION OF THE "MEDICARE FOR ALL ACT"**



April 25, 2007

Our Nation's healthcare system boasts many triumphs – and many failures. As a nation we spend more than \$1.9 trillion on health care, yet the number of those without insurance continues to grow. At last count, more than 46 million Americans under age 65 had no health insurance. This is an increase of 1.3 million people from the previous year, and continues this upward trend that began in 2000.

Those individuals who lack health insurance often forgo vital treatment and are left to depend upon a thinning safety net of healthcare providers. No health insurance often means filing medical bankruptcies or, worse yet, becoming one of the 18,000 premature American deaths each year that are attributable to lacking health insurance.

It is time to act. Today I am introducing "Medicare for All." It will make the tried, true, and trusted Medicare program available to everyone under age 65. Citizens will also have the option of selecting from any of the health benefit plans available to Members of Congress, the President, and Federal employees. People with lower incomes will continue to receive extra help with cost-sharing and premiums in order to access Medicare services.

According to the Institute of Medicine, insuring all Americans would actually save the country \$380 billion a year, partly because we already pay for the health care of the uninsured, who wait until they are in crisis and often receive their care in emergency rooms. If comprehensive healthcare coverage is available to all Americans, better preventative services and earlier treatments will be received, lowering healthcare costs. All Americans will reap the economic benefits of a healthier nation, from a stronger economy to lower health insurance expenses.

This plan will save not only lives, but also American jobs. American companies are competing in the international marketplace against businesses that do not directly bear the costs of providing their employees and retirees with health care.

As a result of a slowing economy earlier in the decade and healthcare premiums increasing faster than wages and incomes, the number of people with employer-based health insurance coverage continues to decline. Approximately 12.4 million people lost their employer-based insurance between 2000 and 2005. Premiums for family coverage have increased by 87 percent since 2000. American companies are trying to do the right thing, but it is getting more difficult.

I urge my colleagues – both Democrats and Republicans – to support this bill, and join me in addressing the healthcare crisis faced by millions of Americans today.